

**Remarks**

The above Amendments and these Remarks are in reply to the Office Action mailed May14, 2004. The fee for conversion of claims from dependent form to independent form is included herewith. An Information Disclosure Statement submitted herewith, together with the appropriate fee.

Claims 1-24 were pending in the Application prior to the outstanding Office Action. In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-6, 10-15, 17, 18 and 22-24, and objected to claims 7-9, 16 and 19-21 solely as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. The present Response cancels claims 2, 7, 12-15, 23 and 24, amends claims 1, 3, 6, 8, 11, 16-22 and adds new claims 25-33, leaving for the Examiner's present consideration claims 1, 3-6, 8-11, 16-22, and 25-33. Reconsideration of the rejections is requested.

\* \* \* \* \*

In the present Response, Applicants have accepted, for the purposes of the present patent application, the claims that the Examiner considers allowable, and have canceled the remainder of the claims. In particular:

**Regarding independent claim 1**, the Examiner rejected claim 1, but objected to claim 7 solely as being dependent upon rejected base claims 1 and 2 (claim 7 depended from claim 2, which depended from claim 1). Applicants have now re-written independent claim 1 to incorporate the limitations of claims 2 and 7. Claim 1 therefore should now be allowable.

**Regarding newly independent claim 16**, the Examiner objected to claim 16 solely as being dependent upon rejected base claims. Claim 16 depended from rejected claim 15, which

depended from rejected claim 14, which depended in turn from rejected originally independent claim 13. Claim 16 has now been amended to incorporate the limitations of independent claim 13 and all the intervening claims 14 and 15, so claim 16 should now be allowable.

**Regarding newly independent claims 19-21**, the Examiner objected to claims 19-21 solely as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. Claims 19-21 each depended directly from independent claim 13. Claims 19-21 have now each been amended to incorporate the limitations of independent claim 13, so claims 19-21 each should now be allowable.

**All the remaining dependent claims 3-6, 8-11, 17-18 and 22** either originally depended from a claim now believed allowable, or have been amended to depend from a claim now believed allowable.

**Claims 2, 7, 12-15, 23 and 24** have been canceled, so their rejections are considered moot.

In addition to the above, **new claims 25-33** have been added to more particularly point out the invention. These claims each depend from one of the newly allowable independent claims, and therefore should be patentable for at least the same reasons as the respective independent claims.

\* \* \* \* \*

In light of the above, it is respectfully submitted that all of the claims now pending in the subject patent application should be allowable, and a Notice of Allowance is requested. The Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned if he can assist in any way in expediting issuance of a patent.

The claims canceled herein have been canceled in order to expedite issuance of a patent. Applicants presently intend to pursue such claims or similar claims in a continuing patent application.

An Information Disclosure Statement submitted herewith, together with the appropriate fee. Applicants assume that the Examiner has considered or will consider all information which was considered by the Office in an ancestor patent application. MPEP 609(I)(A)(2) (edition 8 rev. 2).

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any underpayment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-0869 for any matter in connection with this response, including any fee for extension of time, which may be required.

Respectfully submitted,

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